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UNCSA TO HOST SECOND ANNUAL ENTERTAINMENT TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE WITH CIRQUE DU SOLEIL

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (September 20, 2010) – The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA) and the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts are hosting the second annual UNCSA Southeastern Regional Entertainment Technology Conference from September 30 through October 2, 2010 on the UNCSA campus in Winston-Salem.

Building on the success of last year’s conference, this year’s event will again occur over three days and will be presented by members of the technical operations team of Cirque du Soleil and their partners Stage Technologies, Coolux, Vari-Lite and Meyer Sound Laboratories. The conference is open to students and faculty of university theatre departments and includes demonstrations and workshops covering the use of cutting-edge technologies in Cirque du Soleil productions.

The UNCSA Southeastern Regional Entertainment Technology Conference is part of several regional conferences highlighting the unique, extensive and carefully orchestrated technological requirements that go into a Cirque du Soleil production. The conferences are a rare opportunity to get a behind the scenes look at Cirque du Soleil productions—perhaps some of the most complicated entertainment experiences being performed today. Conference topics include audio, stage automation, projections, rigging, theatre operations as well as wardrobe and wig/makeup.

New this year are workshops focusing on machine engineering and the performing artist, which merges the creativity of the design team of Cirque du Soleil, the needs of the performing artist and cutting-edge automation technology. Also new this year are workshops focusing on the unique show design creative process of Cirque du Soleil.

Cirque du Soleil has identified a need to hire hundreds of theatre technicians over the next several years to perform the technical elements of its current and future productions. Cirque du Soleil has organized these conferences to help faculty members, students and other interested individuals learn more about the requirements and skill sets needed to prepare for a career in the entertainment theatre industry and more specifically for a career in technical operations with Cirque du Soleil.
“We are delighted that this conference is returning for a second year to the UNCSA campus. It fits perfectly with our mission of training talented students for professional careers in the arts,” Kenan Institute for the Arts executive director Margaret Mertz said. “It is a wonderful opportunity for our design and production faculty and students to learn about the cutting edge technology utilized by this internationally acclaimed organization.”

Presenters at the 2010 conference include:

**Diane Quinn, Vice President of Show Quality and Integrity, Cirque du Soleil**
Quinn has been with Cirque du Soleil since 2004. She has held a series of positions including Public Services Director (Corteo), Director of Artist Management, and Company Manager (KA) in Las Vegas. Currently, Quinn is the VP, Show Quality and Integrity. In this capacity, she is responsible for the artistic quality for each of the shows. A veteran of the arts and entertainment scene in Toronto, Quinn’s positions, among others, prior to joining Cirque include founding producer of Soulpepper Theatre Company and Festival of Classics, Coordinator of the Arts Administration Programme at the University of Toronto, and Executive Director of Toronto Women in Film and Television. Volunteerism in the cultural sector has also played a key role for Quinn where she served as Board President of the Toronto Theatre Alliance, and Board VP for Women in Film and Television as well as serving on the CAAAЕ (Canadian Association of Arts Administration Educators). Quinn also has been invited to jury for the Ontario Arts Council, and for the Fringe Festival’s inaugural playwriting selection committee and has authored the published “The Indie Theatre Producer’s Guide.” Quinn is a graduate of the University of Toronto Arts Specialist Programme – with a Major in Arts Administration.

**Krista Monson – Director of Casting, Resident Shows**
Monson started her career with Cirque du Soleil as Artistic Coordinator and Artistic Director of the show “O” in Las Vegas. Prior to working with Cirque du Soleil, she was a director, choreographer, producer and educator. She is the recipient of two Elizabeth Sterling Haynes awards in the area of Outstanding Choreography and also acted as choreographer for the Opening and Closing Ceremonies for the 2001 IAAF World Championships in Athletics—the third largest sporting event in the world. As an educator, Monson was the modern jazz and theatre dance instructor at Grant MacEwan College’s Theatre Arts Department in Canada and also designed and taught the tap program at Los Angeles County High School for the Arts (LACHSA).

**Leu Strope – Operations Production Manager “The Beatles LOVE”**
Since June of 2007, Strope has been the Operations Production Manager for “The Beatles LOVE” by Cirque du Soleil. He has toured domestically and internationally with two of Cirque du Soleil’s Big Top productions. He also spent three years as the Production Manager of Carolina Ballet and several seasons with Arizona Theatre Company. Strope holds a BA from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MA from the University of Arizona.

**Eric Ludacer – Head of Projections “The Beatles LOVE”**
Ludacer started his career with Cirque Du Soleil in late 2005 as an on-call follow spot operator for the production of “La Nouba” in Orlando FL and has worked his way up to the Head of Projections of Love. Before joining Cirque he spent many years touring nationally and internationally with show such as Miss Saigon, 42nd Street, Les Miserables, and The Who’s Tommy. Ludacer has also worked on the installation team for Universal Studios Island of Adventure and as the House Electrician for the Progress Energy Performing Arts Center. He is a 1998 graduate of the University of North Carolina School of the Arts with a BFA in Lighting Design.

Mike Peters – Assistant Head of Rigging “O”
Peters started as the lead rigger of the maintenance crew for “O” six years ago. For the last two years, he has been the Assistant Head of Rigging. Peters worked for Royal Caribbean International on several of their ships for about three years. He ran production shows, performed maintenance, and handled all the “Flying by Foy” equipment and doing installs on new ships. Peters also has worked with the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, the Peter Britt Music and Arts festival, the Lied Center, and the Utah Shakespeare Festival. Peters has a BFA from Southern Oregon State College in Technical Direction and a MFA in Technical Direction from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln.

Mark Jenkins – Training and Technical Development Manager, Resident and Theatre Shows
Originally from England, Jenkins began his Cirque career in early 2003 with the creation of “Zumanity” in the Carpentry and Prop Department. In October 2005, he joined the creation of “The Beatles LOVE” as their Head of the Prop Department. In November 2009, he left show operations to join Cirque’s Technical and Show Support Department as their Training and Technical Development Manager. Prior to Cirque, Jenkins spent several years managing crews on large scale productions in Las Vegas, used his artistic talents in Los Angeles on Film, Music Video and Theme Parks and spent several years on cruise ships as a Technical Director.

Gemma Guy – General Manager, Stage Technologies
Having trained at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the UK, Guy has been involved in the theatre entertainment industry for more than 13 years. She has had extensive experience managing technical departments both onboard Carnival cruise ships and as technical coordinator in Carnival Corporation’s Miami headquarters. Guy joined Stage Technologies as a Sales Manager in June 2006, enjoying two years in their London headquarters before recently being appointed General Manager of the Las Vegas office.

Jason Rauhoff – Technical Support Digital Products Specialist, Meyer Sound Laboratories
In his position on the Digital Products Support Team at Meyer Sound, Rauhoff provides product support and training to users of Meyer Sound’s digital products and teaches seminars as part of the company’s worldwide education program. Before joining Meyer Sound, Rauhoff spent 16 years in Las Vegas as a FOH mixer, programmer, recording engineer, and sound designer. His Cirque du Soleil credits include “Zumanity,” “ZAIA,” “CRISS Angel Believe,” and “Viva Elvis.” Rauhoff also worked on The
Dragon’s Treasure show at the Bubble Theatre in Macau (2009 TEA Award winner), The Bellagio Conservatory, and The Rat Pack is Back at the Sarah Las Vegas. Rauhoff was also a recording engineer for “The College Dropout” album by Kanye West (winner of the 2005 Grammy for Best Rap Album and nominee for the 2005 Grammy Album of the Year), as well as the soundtrack albums for “ZAIA” and “Zumanity.” Rauhoff graduated with honors from Columbia College in Chicago in 1993. He holds a BA in Audio.

Other presenters from Cirque du Soleil include: Garry Savage – Director for the Center of Research and Innovation in Performance, Valerie LeBlonde – Assistant Director for the Center of Research and Innovation in Performance, Karen Gay – Director of Global Citizenship, and Ruben Permel – Head of Wardrobe for “Viva Elvis”. Also presenting will be Thommy Hall from Vari-Lite.

For more information and details on the conference, visit http://faculty.uncsa.edu/techconference.

The University of North Carolina School of the Arts (www.uncsa.edu) is the University of North Carolina’s conservatory for the arts, dedicated entirely to the professional training of students possessing exceptional talents in the performing, visual and moving image arts. UNCSA offers students focused, intense, professional training at the high school, baccalaureate, and masters levels in its schools of Dance, Design and Production, Drama, Filmmaking and Music.

The Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts incubates projects that sustain artists at every point in their creative development through strategic partnerships that capitalize on visionary thinking in the arts. For more information, visit www.kenanarts.org or call 336.722.0030.

Cirque du Soleil celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2009. From the 20 or so tumblers the company featured when it all began in 1984, Quebec-based Cirque du Soleil has become a leading provider of quality entertainment with 4,000 employees, including 1,000 artists who hail from some 40 different countries.

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